

# Gambling. Do I know someone with a problem?

## Key Points

Australians are some of the biggest gamblers in the world

Signs to look out for

What can you do?

Australians are some of the biggest gamblers in the world. We bet on the races, gamble online, enjoy a flutter at the casino or pub, and cross our fingers for lotteries and scratchies.

All of these are relatively harmless in small doses, but when money for food, fuel and housing ends up lining the pockets of the gambling industry, we have to reflect on what is really going on.

Excessive gambling is associated with a host of problems: relationship breakdown, job loss, poor physical health, and even criminal behaviour, all arise from problem gambling. What starts off as a harmless flutter can end up ruining not only the gambler's life, but the lives of their loved ones too.

## How do you know if someone's gambling is getting out of control?

People with a gambling problem put a lot of effort into keeping their problems hidden from family, friends and colleagues. People other than the gambler often can't see the whole picture of what is happening, but there are a few signs that someone might be struggling with a gambling problem.

### 1. They have a decent paying job, but are often short of money

Problem gambling wreaks havoc with a budget, with problems gamblers routinely short of money

### 2. They lie about their gambling and its consequences

You might notice that something doesn't quite ring true about how they spend their time or where their money is going

### 3. Their social activity centres around gambling

Whether it's a night out at the casino, a night in around the poker table, or taking odds on the sports, problem gamblers will tend to include gambling in their social activities

### 4. They struggle to pay bills despite having a decent income

Most people will gamble with money they can afford to lose, problem gamblers will often spend money for housing, food and other essentials on gambling

### 5. They don't have time for work or spending time with family and friends

Someone with a gambling problem often spends so much time gambling or thinking about gambling that they don't have time for anyone else



Converge International is your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider. To make an appointment or speak to a consultant:

**1300 our eap**  
**1300 687 327**

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## What can you do if you think someone has a gambling problem?

First and foremost, they are not alone. In Australia, it is estimated that between 80,000 and 160,000 people suffer significant problems from their gambling. Help is available, but they have to be willing to accept this help.

### 1. Speak to someone about it

If you feel comfortable approaching them, do it, and if not, speak with someone else who might be able to help; if there isn't anyone, speak with a professional for assistance.

### 2. Encourage them to seek professional help

Free and confidential support is just a phone call away. They can call Gambler's Help (**1800 858 858**) for immediate telephone support, or Converge International (**1300 687 327**) to arrange to see an experienced counsellor.

### 3. Help them to see other ways of solving problems

Problem gamblers often see gambling as a way to solve or avoid problems; help them see that there are much better ways of dealing with problems than gambling

### 4. Fill their time

If someone is cutting back on gambling, they will probably end up with a lot of free time; finding something constructive to do with them can make it easier for them to overcome the urge to gamble

### 5. Keep them accountable

With their permission, keep them accountable for sticking within their limits

Converge International's experienced counsellors can help a problem gambler to see how gambling might be affecting their life, and can help them take concrete steps towards freeing themselves from a gambling addiction. To arrange a free and confidential appointment, call Converge International on **1300 687 327**.

### About Converge International

Operating since 1960, Converge International is the pioneer and a major Australian owned international provider of employee assisted services programs across all sectors of industry. To find out more about us, visit our website at [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au) or call **1300 687 327**