

Teen Gambling FAQs



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What is considered underage gambling?

In Michigan, underage gambling refers to any form of betting or wagering by someone who is under the legal age. You must be 21 or older to participate in online casino gambling, sports betting, and to enter the three commercial casinos in Detroit, Michigan. Horse racing, fantasy sports, Michigan Lottery games, and charitable gaming (like bingo or raffles)—are legal for individuals 18 and older.

Why do teens start gambling?

Teens may gamble for fun, curiosity, or to feel part of a group. Some are drawn in by social media or video games that mimic gambling. Others may use gambling to escape stress or boost self-esteem—especially if they win early on.

Why is gambling dangerous for teens?

The teenage brain is still developing, especially the areas that control impulse and decision-making. This makes young people more likely to take risks and less able to recognize long-term consequences—putting them at higher risk of developing gambling problems later in life.

Are teens who gamble more likely to have problems as adults?

Yes. Research shows that kids who start gambling early are 4 times more likely to develop a gambling problem as adults. Early exposure can create unhealthy habits and distorted beliefs about luck, skill, and money.

What are the warning signs that my teen might be gambling?

Watch for changes in behavior or mood—such as unexplained money problems, borrowing or stealing, lying about activities, obsession with sports scores or online games, secrecy around their phone, or withdrawing from family and friends.

How can I talk to my teen about gambling?

Keep the conversation open and nonjudgmental. Ask what they know about gambling and where they see it (in games, ads, or online). Explain that gambling is designed so the house always wins, and that losses can quickly spiral. Encourage healthy, low-risk ways to handle stress and have fun.

Where can I get help if I'm concerned about my teen?

If you suspect your teen is gambling, reach out for support. Call or text the Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLER (426-2537), or visit www.800gambler.org for confidential help and resources. You don't have to handle it alone.



Get more helpful tips at DontBetOnYourFuture.org.

