

some warning signs of compulsive gambling

1. Lost time from work due to gambling.
2. Increased stress at home due to gambling.
3. Gambling to get money in order to pay debts.
4. A strong urge to return as soon as possible after losing in order to win back losses.
5. Gambling until the last dollar is gone.
6. Borrowing to finance more gambling.
7. Gambling for longer periods of time than planned.
8. Gambling to escape worry or problems.
9. Gambling to celebrate good fortune.
10. A strong urge to return as soon as possible after winning in order to win more.

Help is available

Aspirus Employee Assistance Services has counselors available to help you and your family. You can call the confidential helpline 24 hours a day at:

715.848.4357 ~ 800.236.4457
TDD# 715.845.4928

Remember,
Aspirus Employee
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is confidential.



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Compulsive Gambling



warning signs



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the hidden disease

Compulsive gambling is often a hidden addiction. Unlike drug or alcohol use, it cannot be detected by a blood test or by appearance. Since it is often a means of escaping from other life problems, it may go unnoticed as a problem itself.

It is estimated that as many as five percent of Americans may be compulsive gamblers. Similar to other addictive behaviors, such as chemical dependency, gambling may increase over time despite both negative consequences and repeated attempts to stop. Compulsive gambling is a progressive disorder that eventually demands significant changes in lifestyle and social environment. It affects not only the gambler, but also his or her family, employer, and community.



the gambler's life

Compulsive gamblers experience a short-lived high or euphoric state while gambling. Great effort is expended attempting to achieve and maintain this high. As a result, the gambler's life is one of financial and emotional insecurity. This may lead to episodes of extreme anger and rage followed by feelings of hopelessness, helplessness and depression.

The gambler may attempt to escape these feelings by overeating, alcohol abuse, or other addictive behaviors. Similar to the alcoholic who hides bottles of alcohol, compulsive gamblers may hide betting slips, lottery tickets, and gambling money from their family.

As more and more of the gambler's attention is focused on gambling, family members often feel abandoned and resentful. The family unit may unravel. Work may also suffer as the gambler arrives late, takes long lunches, or spends excessive time on the phone.

the three phases of compulsive gambling

The Winning Phase

After a big win or a series of wins, gamblers experience unrealistic optimism that the winning will continue. They begin to feel great excitement prior to and during gambling. They begin increasing the amount bet and the time spent gambling.

The Losing Phase

Gamblers now start losing more than winning. They often gamble alone to hide their gambling from others.

As losses mount, they may begin borrowing money, both legally and illegally. They may start lying to family and friends, and become irritable, restless and withdrawn. They begin to "chase" their losses, returning soon after a loss in an attempt to win back what has been lost.

The Desperation Phase

As more time is spent gambling, the gambler becomes increasingly alienated from family and friends. There may be desperate attempts to finance the gambling by both legal and illegal means. Problems are blamed on others, and alcohol and/or drug abuse may arise. Feelings of hopelessness may be accompanied by suicidal thoughts.