

Gambling: Keeping it Fun

For many, a visit to the casino is a form of entertainment, a choice they make to spend their entertainment dollars. However, for some people, going into the casino, playing the lottery, or betting on a game can turn into a serious health problem.

Here are some easy steps you can follow to make sure your gambling stays on the fun side:

- Only use disposable money to gamble. After all the bills are paid, money is saved, and groceries are stocked, the leftover money is yours to spend as you want.
- Never borrow money from friends or family, work associates, or your spouse to gamble.
- Decide the amount of money you are going to gamble with and take only that cash into the casino or to the lottery counter.
- Do not bring any extra money, credit cards, or debit cards into the casino with you. This protects you from overspending.
- Decide how much time you are going to stay in the casino or racetrack and stick to it. You can set an alarm on your phone to remind you when it is time to leave.

Think of gambling like you think of going to a movie. When you go to the theater, you spend money for your ticket and snacks. It is your entertainment for the evening. You leave with the experience, but without your money! **Thinking of gambling in a similar way, as an experience that you pay for - without expecting any money back - is a healthy way to approach any gambling activity.**

People who gamble responsibly do so for fun, not to make money or escape from problems. They limit time and money spent gambling and understand that the odds are always with the house.

Having a problem with gambling is not a sign of weakness, moral failing, or lack of willpower. It is a treatable mental health disorder. If you are experiencing a loss or have an addiction to alcohol or other drugs, you are more likely to develop a gambling problem.

*For more information please call **1-800-BETS OFF** to be connected to a problem gambling treatment professional in your area. They can answer questions and get you the help you and your family may need. You can also visit www.1800BETSOFF.org to chat live with someone who understands.*