

Impacts of Gambling on the brain

When we gamble, our brain releases a chemical called dopamine, which makes us feel good. Because of this, we may want to keep gambling.

The more we gamble, the more our brain gets used to the dopamine, which can make it harder to get that good feeling. This can make us want to gamble more and we may get cravings for it.

In the worst case, we can experience withdrawal symptoms similar to those seen in alcohol or drug use.

It's common to have strong superstitions, convinced that specific actions taken during or before gambling will lead to a win. We may even believe that because we have put so much money in that we are just one more away from a big win. This is never true as gambling systems are designed to take our money, not let us win.

We may even begin to believe we are going to be lucky this time, using the machine that "always pays out".

Some gambling, particularly the pokies, makes our brains think we are winning even when we aren't - lights and music are used to trick our brain into thinking we *nearly* won. This can affect our brain the same as if we had won.



Studies have shown that gambling can change areas in the brain that manage rewards and how we handle emotions and stress.

Tips for safer gambling



Understand the risk - the house always wins



Set limits with your time



Talk with your gambling support person



Gamble with a clear mind, not when you are upset or stressed



Don't try to win back what you have lost



Set limits with your money



Maintain balance in life - spend time in culture, do activities that you enjoy.



Don't depend on good luck strategies

Connect to your local
Gambling Help Service:

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