



WHEN GAMBLING BECOMES AN ADDICTION

INFORMATION ON GAMBLING ADDICTION



Bundesinstitut für
Öffentliche Gesundheit

**CHECK
DEIN
SPIEL**





KASINO

Gambling can be addicting.
Where are you at?

FUN CAN TURN INTO AN ADDICTION

Gambling is fun. It's exciting and every game is different. What's more, the idea of winning some fast money is very tempting. It also means you bet money, of course. But when you do, you only bet small amounts you don't need for anything important.

Or do you tend to gamble more frequently and longer than you really want to? Do you bet more money than you have to spare? These are clear signs that gambling is becoming an addiction.



Be honest with yourself

Look at what you're doing. Take the test on page 8.



THE GAMBLING TRAPS

Gambling can become an addiction. Here are four reasons why:

1

... Short game rounds are especially appealing

One example is roulette, where the ball is rolled in short, successive rounds. Players have little time to think – and little time to consider what they're doing.

2

... "Near wins" entice you to keep playing

When the reels on the slot machine are almost a winning combination or the horse race almost ends the way you predicted.

3

... The deceptively "good" feeling of controlling the game

The stop buttons on slot machines, for instance, or being overconfident in poker give you this feeling.

4

... Games with tokens or virtual points instead of actual cash

The problem here is, you tend to bet more and don't notice how much money you've really lost.

WARNING SIGNS

A gambling addiction develops gradually. At first, you don't even notice it. Or maybe you don't want to notice it?

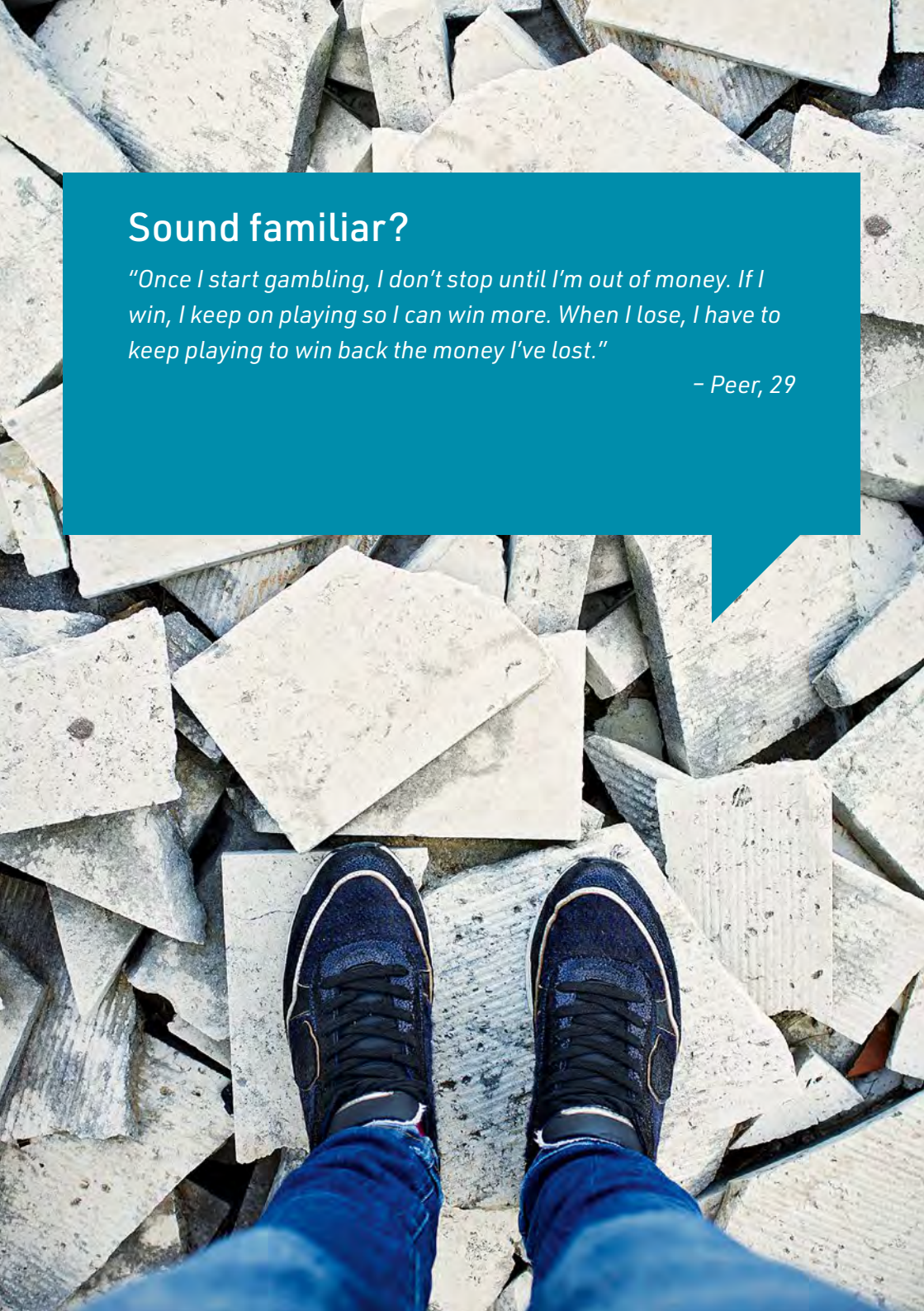
Signs of a gambling addiction

- You can't stop playing.
 - You gamble away all the money you have on you.
 - When you lose, you always blame someone else.
 - You constantly think about gambling.
 - You have an urge to gamble again as soon as possible.
 - You borrow money from other people in order to gamble.
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Be honest with yourself

Look at what you're doing. Do you show any signs of having a gambling problem?



Sound familiar?

"Once I start gambling, I don't stop until I'm out of money. If I win, I keep on playing so I can win more. When I lose, I have to keep playing to win back the money I've lost."

– Peer, 29

WHEN YOU JUST CAN'T STOP

Everything goes well at first. You just really enjoy gambling. It gives you a thrill and you spend more and more time at the slot machines, the casino or online.

Am I already addicted?

"What happens when my whole life suddenly revolves around gambling? Am I addicted then?"

– Sabine, 42

DO YOU GAMBLE FOR FUN OR ARE YOU AT RISK OF BECOMING ADDICTED?

A gambling addiction develops in three phases:

It starts out casually ...

You think gambling is fun at first. When you win, it feels good, so you bet more.

... then it gets dangerous

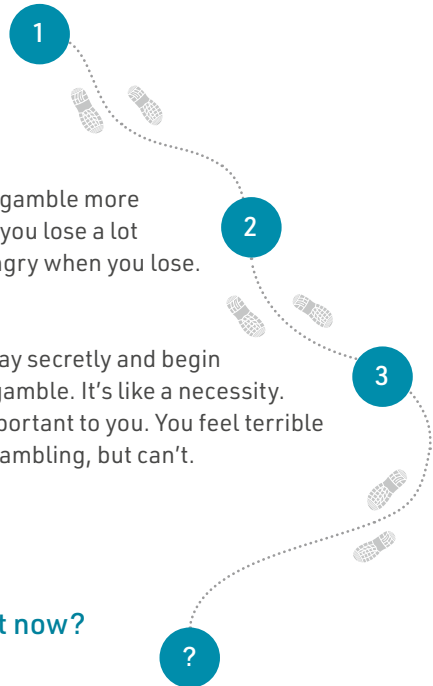
You think about gambling all the time and gamble more frequently and longer. As a consequence, you lose a lot of money. You become agitated and get angry when you lose.

... until finally it is an addiction.

The first problems start to emerge: You play secretly and begin borrowing money. You feel compelled to gamble. It's like a necessity. Family, work, and friends become less important to you. You feel terrible about yourself and actually want to stop gambling, but can't.

What stage are you at right now?

Take the test on the next page.



**IT'S A
FACT**

Winning is not a personal achievement. You can't control it. Winning is a matter of chance!

DO I HAVE A GAMBLING PROBLEM?

Test yourself to see where you stand.
Are you still ok or is it time to act?

	Yes	No
1. I bet more money than I can afford.	☐	☐
2. I have tried to play less, but it doesn't work.	☐	☐
3. I get agitated and irritable when I can't gamble.	☐	☐
4. Others have occasionally criticized me because I gamble so much.	☐	☐
5. I feel guilty because I can't stop gambling and lose a lot of money.	☐	☐
6. I keep gambling to win back money I've lost.	☐	☐
7. I've borrowed money from others so that I can keep gambling.	☐	☐
8. I've done things that are wrong to get money for gambling.	☐	☐
9. I have asked other people for money to pay my gambling debts.	☐	☐

Did you answer "Yes" to any of these questions? If so, your gambling behaviour is critical. More information on who to turn to for help is provided at the end of this brochure.



At www.check-dein-spiel.de (English: "check your game"), you can take a more detailed test of your gambling behaviour. The site gives you numerous tips on gambling addiction.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF A GAMBLING ADDICTION

Sometimes an addiction can destroy your entire life. Family and friends desert you; you lose your job. Common consequences are:

- You don't have enough money for rent or food.
 - You lie because you're ashamed.
 - You borrow money and can't pay it back.
 - Relationships and friendships fail.
 - You gamble even more to forget your problems.
-



Be honest with yourself

Look at what you're doing. Are you familiar with some of these consequences? Find help before your problems get any bigger.



People with a gambling addiction need help

More information is provided on pages 12 and 13.



AT FIRST I DIDN'T NOTICE A THING

But at some point I started wondering what had changed. Gambling had apparently become more important to my husband than our relationship. Then we started having money issues. But talking about it always ended in an argument. I felt powerless, angry and afraid. Where would it go from here?

HELP FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Is someone in your family addicted to gambling?

Friends and family members often are the first to see the signs of a gambling addiction. Here's what you can do:

1

... Have the courage to stop helping

Are you trying to help by playing down the problem in front of friends and acquaintances? Have you perhaps even paid debts that have accumulated? You mean well, but in reality you are supporting your loved one's addictive behaviour and thereby prolonging the gambling addiction.

2

... Don't exceed your own limits

See to your own well-being and that you don't exceed your own financial and emotional limits. You are not alone with your problems.

3

... Talk openly with children about problems and fears

Children suffer when a parent with a gambling addiction barely notices them anymore. Disappointment, shame and financial hardship weaken their self-esteem. Help your child to talk about his or her problems and fears.

**Friends and family of gambling addicts need help too.
More information is provided on page 12**

IT'S A FACT

Friends and family cannot help a gambling addict by keeping the addiction a secret or paying his or her debts. Addicts must learn that they are responsible for the consequences of their behaviour.

HERE'S WHERE YOU CAN GET HELP



BlÖG helpline: 0800-1 37 27 00 (in German)

Free, anonymous, round-the-clock counselling and information on gambling addiction. Monday – Thursday 10 a.m. – 10 p.m., Friday – Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Foreign-language telephone counselling on gambling addiction:

<https://www.check-dein-spiel.de/hilfe/fremdsprachige-telefon-beratung/>



www.check-dein-spiel.de

Comprehensive information and help portal. Information on gambling and gambling addiction. Online counselling. Detailed self-tests, online rehabilitation programme and counselling centre addresses.



Counselling centres

Gambling and addiction counselling centres help gambling addicts as well as their family and friends free of charge, one-on-one and, on request, anonymous. Look up a counselling centre near you at

www.dhs.de/service/suchthilfeverzeichnis.



Specialist clinic

Gambling addicts can receive in-patient treatment at a specialist clinic. Counselling centres can help you find an opening in a treatment programme and clarify whether your social insurance provider will cover the costs.

Your general practitioner can also support you through the process.

For a list of clinics, visit www.dhs.de/service/suchthilfeverzeichnis.



Self-help groups

Self-help groups are places where people in similar situations can meet to share their experiences and support each other. Self-help groups also often exist for the spouses/partners and children of gambling addicts.

For a list of self-help groups near you, visit:

www.gluecksspielsucht.de/adr/index.php.

For a list of special self-help groups for family and friends, visit:

www.gamanon.de.



Debt counselling

Gambling addicts are often in debt, something that can also affect their family and friends. Debt counsellors work with you to draw up a plan to help you pay off your debt. This service is free of charge.



Debt Advisory Centre Professionals here can help you to reduce your debt.

You can find the nearest Debt Advisory Centre at:

www.schuldenhelpline.de

or

www.meine-schulden.de/beratungsstellen_in_ihrer_naeh



Family and parenting counselling centres

Family and parenting counselling centres can help with family-related problems. This is particularly important for the family and friends of gambling addicts and for children. Counselling is free of charge and, on request, anonymous. For a list of counselling centres, visit www.bke.de or www.dajeb.de (online counselling directory).

INFORMATION ON GAMBLING ADDICTION

BIÖG HELPLINE: 0800-1 37 27 00 (IN GERMAN)

Free, personal counselling, on request anonymous.

Information on gambling addiction.

Monday – Thursday 10 a.m. – 10 p.m., Friday – Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

WWW.CHECK-DEIN-SPIEL.DE

Comprehensive information and help portal with detailed self-tests and online rehabilitation programme.

Publication information

Published by: Bundesinstitut für Öffentliche Gesundheit (BIÖG), Köln.
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Project manager: Stephanie Eckhardt, BIÖG, Köln

Concept, text
and design: em-faktor | Die Social Profit Agentur, Stuttgart

Printing: Warlich Druck Meckenheim GmbH,
Am Hambuch 5, 53340 Meckenheim
Environmentally friendly production.

Status: July 2026

Edition: 3.3.07.26

Article number: 33211311

Images: Cover + p. 5: superdesign / photocase.de
CP 2: / bitstarr / photocase.de
p. 2: rowan / photocase.de
p. 6: Meikel25 / photocase.de
p. 10: Flügelfrei / photocase.de

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