



### What is electronic gambling?

In Nova Scotia, gambling can take many forms, from church raffles and community-hall bingos, to scratch or draw lotteries, to poker games in casinos, and more.

Electronic gambling is the type that we will focus on here. Some examples include video lottery terminals (VLTs), push-button slot machines, and online gambling.

### Getting help costs nothing.

If the emotional and financial costs of gambling are getting too high for you or someone you care about, don't wait. Call the number below any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll free, to talk to a professional counsellor. Your call will be kept private.

Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection's Problem Gambling Help Line

1-888-347-8888

1-888-347-3331 (TTY for the hearing impaired)

Contact a counsellor online at [youarenotalone.ca](http://youarenotalone.ca) (click on the Problem Gambling Help Line button).

Locate the Addiction Services office nearest you at [addictionservices.ns.ca](http://addictionservices.ns.ca) or look in the white pages under Addiction Services.

For information about financial counselling and other resources to help you, visit [youarenotalone.ca](http://youarenotalone.ca) and click on 'Resources'.

### Visit our websites.

[youarenotalone.ca](http://youarenotalone.ca)

[yellowflag.ca](http://yellowflag.ca)

# Electronic Gambling too fast to handle?

Toll free 1-888-347-8888 • 1-888-347-3331 (TTY)  
[youarenotalone.ca](http://youarenotalone.ca)



## The faster you play, the more you lose.

Electronic gambling is faster than other forms of gambling. That means that you can play more games in a short period of time. And that means you have to pay more frequently to keep the play going – so you lose more money. And time. The speed of these games requires full concentration. That makes it easy to lose track of how long you've been playing.

The features on these games can also make you think that you have an influence over the outcome. This is only a perception. On most games, whether you win or lose is determined the second you start the play. The games are designed to keep you involved. By showing you "near misses" or letting you select betting amounts, you'll forget that you can't influence the outcome and you'll spend more time playing, which can easily lead to more emotional and financial costs.

## The machine never says "no."

If you're playing poker with a group of friends, eventually the money runs out and/or someone decides it's time to go home. If you're at the local bingo hall, eventually, it closes. But many electronic gambling games are available 24/7. So the playing, and the paying, never stops.

And since you're more likely to be playing alone, just you against the machine, you have nobody to tell you that you've lost more money and time than you should have. The machine doesn't care how much you lose.

Adults in Nova Scotia are gambling a great deal on electronic games, such as VLTs. Those who play at least once a month stand to lose thousands each year. And one in four of those people are at risk of developing serious problems.

The problems are not limited to lost money, either. Other common negative experiences include depression, damaged relationships, and loneliness.

*"Gambling is a vicious, endless cycle. It robbed me of my money, my integrity, and my honesty."*

## What about online gambling?

One of the biggest risks with online gambling is that the Internet brings an electronic form of gambling – one that never stops and never tells how much time or money has been lost - right into our homes. People who may have found casinos or other gambling venues inaccessible now have unlimited access to lottery sites, casino sites, and poker sites. For those people already at risk for boredom or loneliness, having 24/7 access to electronic gambling sites puts them at even greater risk of developing gambling problems.

Maybe you think online gambling is harmless because you play on free gambling sites. Be aware, the odds of your winning can be inflated on these sites. That can make you feel as if you know how to "play like a pro" and entice you to switch over to the pay-to-play site. Once real money is at stake, however, the odds can switch against you – fast.

## Anyone can develop a gambling problem.

Advertising and other marketing media regularly feed us images of happy, popular people who all enjoy gambling as part of their lives with no problems. These ads never show us the other side of the story. So when someone does develop a problem, they often think they are alone in their inability to handle gambling. And that can keep them from reaching out for help.

But the fact is that many Nova Scotians do have a problem. Every year, almost 600,000 Nova Scotians gamble in some way or another. About 50,000 of them are at risk for developing problems; and for about 20,000, those problems will be serious.

*"I will never be able to change the past, but I can look forward to the future. I no longer feel the shame I once did. It is possible to overcome this addiction."*

## I think I have a problem. What do I do now?

- Keep a gambling log. Write down how much money you spend so you can see how much gambling is really costing you. Keep track of how many times you visit the ATM to get more money to gamble.
- Set a limit on how much money you will spend on gambling each month. Treat it as your entertainment budget. When you've spent it: stop.

- If you have the option to use a feature that monitors how much money or time you have spent gambling, use it – but do not rely on it. Listen to your friends and family. If they express concern, consider gambling less often.
- Take a look at your list of leisure activities. Is gambling your main hobby? Find other, healthier, alternatives so you have a balance of leisure activities and will meet people who are not gamblers themselves.
- Get a copy of *Winning Within: A Self Help Guide To Changing Gambling Behaviours*, available on the problem gambling website, and follow the suggestions to make a plan to control your gambling.
- Talk to someone you trust about your plan to change your gambling behaviour. Ask for their support to help you make this change.

Most importantly, you don't have to go through this alone. Call the Problem Gambling Help Line for support. Or, if you would prefer to meet someone in person, call your local Addiction Services office.

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Nova Scotia  
Health Promotion's  
Problem Gambling  
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available to help  
you 24 hours a  
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a week.  
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