

# Healthy Living

## Warning signs of gambling addiction

Football fans across the globe anxiously anticipate the return of college football and the National Football League. Both college and professional football draw tens of millions of viewers each week, and those viewers are likely familiar with advertisements for the various betting platforms and apps fans can look to as they seek to wager on all the action on the gridiron.

The Supreme Court of the United States declared the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act unconstitutional in 2018.

Since that landmark decision, sports betting has been legalized throughout much of the country. Canada also has allowed single-game sports betting since 2021. While many people can bet on sports without becoming addicted, only time will tell if the number of sports fans with gambling addictions increases in the aftermath of the legalization of sports gambling. But a 2025 national survey from the U.S.-based National Council on Problem Gambling found that nearly 20 million American adults report experiencing at

least one problematic gambling behavior “many times” in the past year. Gambling addiction can exact a financial toll, but it also can affect gamblers’ relationships, careers, and family life.

Learning to spot the warning signs of gambling addiction may compel people to seek help. The International Problem Gambling Center notes the following are some of the signs and symptoms of problem gambling.

- Gambling makes home life unhappy
- Experiencing feelings of remorse after gambling

- Preoccupation with gambling

- Borrowing money to gamble

- Gambling to escape worry or trouble

- Changes in sleeping and eating habits

- Losing work time due to gambling. Problem gamblers also may miss work, and students may miss school, due to gambling.

- Gambling to obtain money to pay debts

- Considering or committing an illegal act to finance gambling

- Celebrating good fortune by gambling

- Thoughts of suicide

There are additional pitfalls that individuals who gamble may want to avoid. For example, the 2025 NCPG survey found that 35 percent of individuals who gambled on three-plus activities weekly or more often met the threshold for concerns about high-risk gambling. In addition, roughly one in four fantasy sports bettors reported problematic behaviors when participating in the NCPG survey.

Age and gender also merit consideration. While just 2 percent of individuals 55 and older reported concerning gambling behavior, 15 percent of adults between the ages of 18 and 34 reported

ed such behavior. And the rate of gambling-related problems was roughly twice as high among men as women.

As football season kicks off, sports fans concerned about their own or a loved one’s gambling are urged to seek assistance. Such individuals can seek help at gamblingproblems.org.



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## Long-term benefits of getting braces

Braces are commonly worn by school-aged children. Estimates vary, but numerous sources suggest no fewer than 50 percent and as much as 70 percent of children get braces or seek treatment from an orthodontist prior to adulthood.

Braces are known to straighten teeth and make people more confident in their appearance, but the benefits of braces go beyond cosmetic enhancements. When considering whether or not to get braces, people should know that getting them can provide a host of long-term benefits.

- Gum disease prevention: Gum disease is caused when bacteria accumulates along the gum line. When that occurs, people are vul-

nerable to infection and inflammation. Crooked or improperly spaced teeth can make certain areas inaccessible during routine brushing, and that can make the mouth vulnerable to the buildup of plaque and bacteria. When that occurs, the gums can be affected by inflammation and infection that ultimately can cause gum disease. Braces help to straighten teeth and ensure proper spacing between them, which can help to prevent gum disease.

- Reduced risk for cavities: The buildup of bacteria on misaligned and poorly spaced teeth also can increase the risk for cavities. While it can be harder to clean teeth while wearing braces, the Cleveland Clinic

notes that once the braces are off, the straighter teeth and more accessible spaces in the mouth help to prevent cavities.

- Prevent the erosion of bone: The Atlanta Center for Advanced Periodontics notes that misaligned teeth can cause dental bone loss. That's because misaligned teeth prevent normal chewing, which results in a loss of stimulation to the bone. When that happens, the bone that holds teeth in place can break down. Braces help to ensure proper alignment of teeth, and over time that can help to prevent dental bone loss.

- Braces and reduced risk for TMJ disorders: The Mayo Clinic notes that the temporoman-

dibular joint (TMJ) connects the jawbone to the skull. Disorders affecting the TMJ can cause pain in the jaw joint and in the muscles that control movement of the jaw. While the Mayo Clinic notes it can be difficult to pinpoint the exact cause of a TMJ disorder, a misaligned bite can stress the jaw. That stress can potentially contribute to a TMJ disorder. Braces can help to address a misaligned bite, and over time that can reduce risk for a TMJ disorder.

Braces are often associated with producing immediate and positive results. But there are various long-term benefits to braces that merit consideration as well.

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- ✓ Feeling included in conversations
- ✓ Staying connected with family and friends
- ✓ Participating confidently at work or in social settings
- ✓ Supporting brain health and emotional well-being
- ✓ Avoiding frustration and misunderstandings

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