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Lower-Risk
Gambling Guidelines

Developing Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines

Report in Short

Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines Scientific Working Group

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Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines

These guidelines were developed using the most current and highest quality scientific evidence available.

To reduce your risk of experiencing harms from gambling, follow all three of these guidelines:

1

HOW MUCH

Gamble no more than **1%** of household income before tax per month

and

4

HOW OFTEN

Gamble no more than **4 days** per month

and

2

HOW MANY

Avoid regularly gambling at more than **2 types** of games

Yearly household income	Maximum monthly amount
\$10,000	\$8
\$30,000	\$25
\$50,000	\$42
\$70,000	\$58
\$90,000	\$75
\$110,000	\$92
\$130,000	\$108
\$150,000	\$125

WHAT YOU PLAY MATTERS

- ▶ Fast-paced games that involve quick and repeated betting can more quickly and easily lead to problems.
- ▶ For example, with many forms of online gambling, slot machines, electronic gaming machines and poker, people can spend large amounts of money in a short time.

GAMBLING TYPES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

HOWEVER, these limits may not be suitable for you. You should consider gambling less than these guidelines recommend or not at all if you ...

- ▶ Experience problems from **alcohol, cannabis** or other drug use
- ▶ Experience problems with **anxiety** or depression
- ▶ Have a **personal** or **family history** of problems with gambling

SAFER GAMBLING TIPS

- Try to **limit your consumption of alcohol**, cannabis and other drugs while gambling. This will make it easier to stick to the guidelines.
- Try to **limit your access to money**. Consider leaving credit and debit cards at home. There are also apps that can prevent your phone from making payments.
- Try to **schedule activities** right after gambling sessions, which can set a limit on the amount of time you have to gamble.
- **Gambling with other people can affect how you gamble**. Think about how having gambling companions or gambling alone might impact you.
- **Entertainment money**. It is important to keep in mind how much money you are able to spend on entertainment when deciding how much to gamble.
- **Set limits**. If you have a big trip or special event coming up where you'll be gambling, plan ahead, remember the guidelines and set limits.

Visit www.gamblingguidelines.ca for more information.

WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES (HARMS) RELATED TO GAMBLING?

Losing money is the gambling harm that first comes to mind. But gambling can lead to other harms:

- Relationship conflicts, such as neglect of relationship, social isolation, arguing with your spouse
- Emotional distress, such as feelings of guilt, loneliness and isolation.
- Health problems, such as problematic use of alcohol or other drugs

Following these guidelines can help reduce your risk of gambling harms.

THINK ABOUT YOUR REASONS FOR GAMBLING

Is it for fun? If you're gambling to escape problems, you're more likely to experience harm from gambling and might find it harder to stick to the suggested limits.

If you think you are not in control or feel uncomfortable with your gambling, please visit [microsite link] for a list resources in your region.

These guidelines were developed for people of legal gambling age who want to make more informed choices about their gambling.

Rationale for Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines

Gambling is a legal activity that poses potential risks to Canadians. Although only about 1% to 3% of the population struggles with a gambling disorder (Williams, Volberg, & Stevens, 2012), harms related to gambling are distributed widely across the entire population of people who gamble (Browne, 2020). Until now, however, there have been no evidence-informed guidelines for people who gamble to help them do so in a way that reduces their risk of experiencing gambling harms. The project to develop Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines addresses that lack.

The poster reproduced on the previous page presents in full the guidelines developed by the project. The remainder of this report-in-short provides an overview of the development of the guidelines and their audience. More information about the evidence for the individual guidelines and discussion about their development are in the full report, *Developing Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines*.

Key Messages

- The evidence-based Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines can help people who gamble do so in a way that lowers their risk of experiencing harms related to gambling.
- These guidelines are the result of four years of research and the first large-scale, comprehensive project in the world to develop Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines.
- The guidelines provide consistent, evidence-informed advice and messaging for those who promote public health or implement responsible gambling programs.

Developing the Evidence Base for the Guidelines

In 2016, the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction established the Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines Scientific Working Group. The working group led the first large-scale, comprehensive project in the world to develop Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines.

The final guidelines, as presented in the poster, provide a set of quantitative limits and a summary of information about special risk populations, contextual factors and other health messages that should be included when educating the public about how to gamble in a lower-risk manner. These guidelines are the result of four years of research and consultation that included:

- Collaboration with an international group of experts made up of some of the top gambling researchers in the world;
- Risk curve analyses of over 60,000 people who gamble from eight different countries;
- Feedback from over 10,000 Canadians collected via an online gambling survey administered twice;
- A series of interviews and focus groups with over 50 people who gamble from across Canada;
- Two comprehensive literature reviews; and
- Consultation with a pan-Canadian, multi-sectoral advisory committee of over 20 members.

Audience for the Guidelines

The guidelines are intended to assist a wide variety of audiences, including:

- Anyone who gambles or who has friends or family who gamble;
- Policy makers, gambling regulators and operators with an interest in promoting lower-risk gambling;
- Those developing training materials and capacity-building programs for healthcare providers and allied professionals on how to identify risky gambling behaviour;
- Primary care and regional health authorities, and mental health and addiction counsellors; and
- Those within public health who are developing responsible gambling and other awareness campaigns to inform the public about lower-risk gambling.

The most effective, long-term, sustainable strategy to ensure that the Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines reduce harms related to gambling is for organizations or teams dedicated to promoting responsible gambling to use the guidelines and incorporate them in their products and promotional activities. It is hoped that existing responsible gambling initiatives and programs, public health professionals developing awareness campaigns to inform the public about lower-risk gambling, and those developing training materials and capacity-building programs aimed at identifying and preventing risky gambling will use the guidelines in their messaging and products so that they become a prominent component of the public health response to the issue of harms related to gambling.

To Learn More

The project's web site, www.gamblingguidelines.ca, provides more information on adapting and using the guidelines. The Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines main poster and accompanying products, including the report providing more detail about the methods and results of the research conducted to develop the guidelines (Young et al., 2020), are available for download there. The report provides full acknowledgement of those who contributed their time and expertise over the course of the project. The project would not have been possible without the generous financial contribution of Mise sur toi.

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ISBN 978-1-77178-719-2

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Production of this document has been made possible through a financial contribution from Mise sur toi. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Mise sur toi.