



## Gambling in the time of coronavirus? Plan to play it safer

COVID-19 has taught us all the value of being prepared. And now, as land-based gambling venues reopen in Ontario, visitors can expect many changes: mandatory face masks, social-distancing, sanitizing stations and plexiglass barriers to name a few.

But safety protocols should go beyond COVID-related hygiene. Pre-planning, setting and sticking to a strict budget and time limit are key. Playing it safer also means never gambling to make money or replace income.

The team at the Responsible Gambling Council (RGC) has identified some important advice for those who opt for “in-person gambling” as venues reopen.

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### If you gamble, have a plan.

Prepare yourself beforehand:

- Be self-aware – don’t gamble when you’re upset or stressed. Gambling is not recommended if you suffer from anxiety or depression
- Gambling is not a way to earn or replace income so don’t think of it as a chance to win money for a trip, to pay bills or to pay off debt
- Decide on a time and budget before you begin. If gambling online, use the site’s pre-commitment tools to set loss and win limits and stop when you reach those limits

While playing in-venue or online:

- Only gamble with money you have – never borrow money or use money intended for necessities, like rent or food
- Take frequent breaks – move around, get some fresh air, have a coffee or something to eat
- Don’t try to win back what you’ve lost
- Limit or avoid alcohol and/or other substances while gambling

Visit [www.planbeforeyouplay.ca](http://www.planbeforeyouplay.ca) for more planning-related information.



Here are some early signals that you may be going over your limits:

- Feeling guilty, anxious, frustrated, or worried about your gambling
- Thinking or talking more than usual about gambling more to win back losses
- Experiencing extreme highs from gambling wins and extreme lows from gambling losses
- Getting irritated more easily or having less patience when dealing with normal, everyday activities

## Support is available

If you have concerns about your gambling or are worried about someone close to you, help is available. You can contact ConnexOntario for free and confidential help by calling 1-866-531-2600. You can also learn more about the signs of a problem by visiting [www.responsiblegambling.org](http://www.responsiblegambling.org).

**The bottom line: protect yourself and add to your fun by planning before you play.**