

## The Personal Risks of Gambling

Many people enjoy gambling – whether investing in stocks, buying a lottery ticket, playing cards with friends, or going to casinos. For some, gambling goes beyond a fun activity and develops into an unhealthy habit or even an addiction. An individual that has an issue with gambling usually feels a need to gamble and often risks a lot to continue doing it. Below are some signs and symptoms of problem gambling.

### Signs and Symptoms:

- Increasing the frequency and the amount of money gambled
- Spending an excessive amount of time gambling at the expense of job or family time
- Being preoccupied with gambling or with obtaining money with which to gamble
- Getting a special and intense pleasure, an aroused sense of being "in action", when gambling
- Using gambling as a way to escape from problems in life
- Continuing to gamble despite negative consequences such as large losses, or work or family problems, caused by gambling
- Borrowing money to gamble, taking out secret loans, or maximizing credit card balances
- Committing an illegal act to finance gambling, which may include forgery, fraud or theft
- Bragging about wins but not talking about losses
- Frequent mood swings, which are higher when winning and lower when losing
- Gambling for longer periods of time or with more money than originally planned
- Secretive behavior such as hiding betting slips or receipts



If you recognize yourself or others in these descriptions, give us a call. Our counselors are available 24 hours a day, and your EAP benefit covers counseling services. We can help. Appointments can normally be scheduled within **two working days**. **After hours** and **weekend** sessions can also be arranged, if needed. Crisis calls are always handled immediately.

Services are **confidential** to the extent permitted by law, and can be accessed by calling First Sun EAP at **800-968-8143** or in Greater Columbia **803-376-2668**. For more information on this topic as well as the other services you receive from First Sun EAP, please see our website at: [www.firstsuneap.com](http://www.firstsuneap.com).