

SATURDAY

Surviving Christmas

THE FAMILY CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS time is a chance for families to reunite and celebrate the festive season.

But all too often, family gatherings descend into turmoil as old wounds reopen over trivial matters.

Clinical psychologist and hypnotherapist Dr Janet Hall said the festive season can be a stressful time for many families.

"On the day, it's about the rush to make it happen, too much to think of and to do," Dr Hall said.

"We are exhausted before we even start the food and drink and presents.

"This can make us tense and overreact."

Australia's slowing economy and fears of a recession are expected to add further stress.

Dr Hall said a lack of time and money often made for tense family reunions.

"We are all brainwashed by advertising to want Christmas to be a time of connection and a chance to imagine a world of peace," she said. "Even if to many of

us it's humbug, we still want it."

To avoid confrontation at family Christmas parties, Dr Hall recommends tolerance and restraint.

"Bite your tongue, even if you are aggravated by someone. It's not a time to dump your old resentments or open up new ones," Dr Hall said.

"See it all through the eyes of a child — the wonder, the harmony of music and sparkling candles and light, the anticipation of gifts and a good time."

TOYS

MOVE over, Elmo. This year's most popular Christmas gift is likely to be an alien from outer space.

Parents around Australia have pushed the Ben 10 Alien Force action figures to the top of their shopping lists this Christmas.

The colourful action figures are based on the popular children's cartoon, *Ben 10 Alien Force*, and are a hit with the boys.

For the girls, Barbie is as popular as ever.

She may be turning 50 next year, but the doll still has her legions of young fans.

The latest Barbie sings songs from the *Barbie and the Diamond Castle* movie and wears a pink gown that lights up with the flick of a switch.

Elmo may have been surpassed by an alien action figure, but the newest edition of the cuddly red monster from Sesame Street will undoubtedly be stuffed in many a Christmas stocking this year.

Elmo has been one of the most sought after toys of Christmases past, and this year's model is sure to impress the youngsters.

The new Elmo Live sings, dances and tells jokes when you tickle his tummy.

"Techo toys, traditional favourites and soft toys all make an appearance in the top-gifts list," said a Myer spokesman.

Keep it professional

- 1 Limit alcohol consumption
- 2 Try to stick to neutral conversations and avoid hot topics such as religion and politics
- 3 Try to avoid talking about work
- 4 Overdress rather than underdress and make sure clothing is not too revealing
- 5 Remember the corporate hierarchy but don't be too personal or too pushy

Source: NIKKI HEALD

Wish list

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Under 4 years: In the Night Garden cuddle pillows | \$24.95 |
| Girls: Diamond Castle Barbie | \$36.95 |
| Boys: Ben 10 Alien Force Alien Creature Series | \$39.95 |
| Family: The Wii console | \$399 |

Source: Myer

THE OFFICE PARTY

WE all know that snogging a co-worker under the mistletoe at the office Christmas party can play havoc with your career.

Knowing what to say to the boss over a glass of eggnog is just as crucial. Corptraining managing director, Nikki Heald, specialises in training employees and their superiors.

Ms Heald said office Christmas parties were a chance for people to let down their hair after a busy year. "Professionally, you are still on display so there are some rules that you need to adhere to," Ms Heald said.

"Most organisations expect their employees will have some fun but there are still rules because staff are still representing the brand and still representing themselves. The senior managers will be watching."

Committing a social faux-pas at the office party can pose short and long-term problems for staff.

Ms Heald said employers valued employees who were capable of showing restraint in a social setting.

Keep it merry

- 1 Keep family reunions brief. Have a set amount of time and stick to it
- 2 Make it a thrifty one and have a kriss kringle
- 3 Eat and drink in moderation. Get everyone to go for a walk after the meal
- 4 Let bygones be bygones and bite your tongue
- 5 Uphold the spirit of Christmas. Relax and enjoy the wonder and anticipation of Christmas

Source: www.drjanethall.com.au

THE HANGOVER

MOST of us have suffered the pounding headache, queasy stomach or fuzzy-headed feeling that is a hangover — and whispered "never again".

Hangovers last five to 24 hours and can be very unpleasant during the festive season.

The Australian Medical Association's Dr Harry Hemley said the body needed more water to combat excessive alcohol.

He suggested drinking a glass of water for every glass of alcohol during a drinking session — and never drinking on an empty stomach.

But Dr Hemley said prevention — not drinking too much — was always better than cure.

When that failed, painkillers such as Panadol or Panadeine, washed down with plenty of water were the best ways to ease a hangover headache.

PERFECT EARLY CHRISTMAS GIFT TODAY

Christmas is just around the corner and the *Herald Sun* is getting into the spirit with the Happy Elf DVD.

This magical movie stars a Little Elf named Eubie and the voice and original music of Harry Connick Jr.

Don't miss this perfect early Christmas gift for just \$1* with today's *Herald Sun*.



*With the purchase of the *Herald Sun*. Available in Victoria and Riverina only, strictly while stocks last.

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