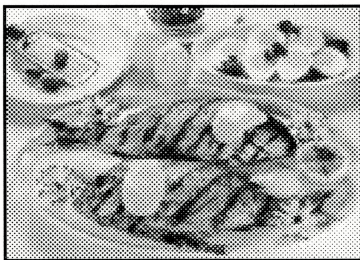


10 ROUND

SKIP THE CLEAN SWEEP

At my first appointment with Dr. Crudo, he told me that most adult eating disorders, including obesity, are a direct throw-back to eating patterns learned in early childhood. Then, he asked me to describe in as few words as possible, what went on at



mealtime back in those early years of my life. So, I told him: "You don't get up from the table until you've finished everything on your plate."

Believe me when I tell you that everything on *my* plate was a whole lot of food! You see, my parents had nine children (including me), plus some of my older siblings (who were as much as twenty-one years older than me), often came by for dinner with *their* spouses and kids. On holidays, in particular, my mother cooked for twenty-five people! Therefore, there was always a ton of food cooking on our stove.

"A ha!" said Dr. Crudo. "And you've carried that eating philosophy into adulthood."

I had to admit to him -- and to myself -- that he was right. That's when I first started to realize that as life-sustaining and comforting as food can be, in over-abundance, it can also be a lethal enemy. As such, I began thinking defensively about food.

My first **Defensive Eating** counter-attack was pushing myself away from the dinner table before I felt "full" -- in other words, when I merely felt satisfied. Then, I took a look at what was left on my plate. Essentially, it amounted to half a "normal size" dinner. The next night at dinnertime, I removed an equivalent amount of food from my plate before I started eating. In actuality, after removing an amount of food equivalent to that which had remained on the plate the night before, I finally learned what a "normal size" portion really was. Then, just so I wouldn't forget what it looked like, I took a picture of it. (Dr. Crudo was quite pleased.)

As I've said in earlier Rounds of this book, learning what a normal portion of food looks like is critical to the success of **Defensive Eating**. Remember, you are not a kid anymore, and you don't have to clean your plate. Save that for holidays like Thanksgiving

when you'll really want to enjoy yourself and the food in front of you.

If you're eating defensively the whole rest of the year, then a "clean sweep" at the holiday dinner table won't torpedo your fight to lose weight.

In fact, believe it or not, in the four years that it took for me to lose 147 pounds, I never once gained weight after a holiday. That's because I ate defensively 365 days a year, and still do. And so should *you*.

Principle #10 of Defensive Eating: Skip the "Clean Sweep."

End of Round 10.