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There's always another slick gimmick to take your money

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UP FRONT/COMMENTARY

I wish I had back all the money I've spent through the years on breast enlargement cream.

Obviously, I got skunked. I should have known better. But when you're a young 20-something and have just had a couple of babies and you look in the mirror and realize the figure you always dreamed you'd have just never materialized, you're sometimes driven to desperate measures.

My thinking was: If the breast enlargement cream company would spend big money advertising in a fine journal like the National Enquirer there must be something to it. People may look askance at the Enquirer's journalistic standards, but I can guarantee you their ad rates ain't cheap.

Eventually the breast enlargement cream went the same way as other useless gadgets I'd been conned into buying over the years. Every time I go to a yard sale now and I see tables filled with veg-o-matics and aroma therapy pillows and mood lights and cellophane waist shrinker belts, I know I'm not the only American who sometimes cannot distinguish fact from fiction and can be suckered into buying some dumb thing by slick advertising.

So when I started getting all these advertisements in my e-mail box for colon cleansing products I had to laugh. I did not know colon cleansing was something that people even did on purpose, much less give testimonials about the process in the New York Times.

Colon cleansing is the new fitness therapy. If you want to feel good, look good and add years to your life you definitely need to cleanse your colon, the ads say, and there are lots of products out there - not cheap - to help you do it.

Those of us who have been around awhile, of course, are not unfamiliar with colon cleansing or the products that make it happen. They're called green apples.

It's just that we never sat around and talked about it before as a party topic. Colon cleansing is fine, but just like sex, people really ought to keep it to themselves.

A friend of mine recently went on a three-day colon cleansing regimen, eating nothing but white rice, vinegar, molasses and lots of water. He called me on Day 2 and said all he'd dreamed about the night before was Big Macs. His colon cleansing experiment ended at noon the next day and at 12:01 he was at the nearest McDonald's banging on the counter.

He said, however, he thought the cleansing worked and he felt a little better for several days afterward. Then he suggested I might think about doing it myself.

I told him I have a few old jars of breast enlargement cream I'll box up and mail to him right away.

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