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Summer Fruit and Veggie Superstars

Columbia, S.C. – July 20, 2006 – The Governor and First Lady's Healthy SC Challenge works to encourage South Carolinians to eat better, exercise and not smoke. Fruits and vegetables provide vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals that help maintain good health. One of the summer season's greatest gifts is the bounty of delicious superstar fruits and veggies it offers. Here are Dr. Ann's top picks and why:

1. **Berries** – All berries are low in calories, high in fiber, brimming with vitamin C and chock full of disease-busting antioxidants. They can be eaten fresh or frozen, tossed into salads, smoothies, yogurt, cereal, pancakes and of course, eaten all by themselves! Most kids love to pick them as much as they love to eat them – so visit your local "pick your own" berry farm for a wholesome, fun way to improve your family's health.
2. **Melon** – Honey dew, cantaloupe, and watermelon are wonderful sources of vitamin C, vitamin A and the carotenoid and bioflavonoid families of plant chemicals that boost immunity, protect vision and reduce the risk of some cancers. Chilled melon wedges are a great addition to any summer breakfast and are the perfect summer dessert.
3. **Peaches** – Sweet and so juicy, a fresh peach offers unrivaled sensory pleasure along with fiber, vitamins A and C, and beta-carotene for only 40 calories! Peaches are wonderful on their own or they can be added to smoothies, fruit salads, a morning bowl of cereal, and of course, your favorite cobbler recipe.
4. **Red/orange/yellow bell peppers** – These colorful and naturally sweet summer superstars provide more vitamin C than oranges and are one of nature's very best sources of beta-carotene and other disease-fighting carotenoids. A child's palate is especially fond of sweet foods and bright color in foods incites eating behavior. Use both of these facts to your advantage and offer a colorful medley of fresh bell pepper strips with a healthy dip for a snack or personal appetizer.
5. **Tomatoes** – Vine-ripe, juicy red summer tomatoes are a gold mine of nutrients for boosting your family's health, including vitamin C, beta-carotene and B vitamins. It's their cancer-fighting lycopene, however, that solidly places them in the "Nutritional Hall of Fame." The smaller the tomato, the more concentrated the lycopene, so offer the super-sweet cherry or grape tomatoes with a healthy dip as a "finger food" most kids will love.
6. **Corn** – A fresh ear of summer corn is an excellent source of vegetable protein, fiber and B vitamins and can boost one of nature's very best foods for lutein, a plant chemical that protects eye health. And everyone loves eating corn on the cob!

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Dr. Ann *is nationally recognized expert in wellness and nutrition. In addition to her private wellness practice, Just Wellness, she provides corporate wellness consulting, and is the author of* Dr. Ann's 10-Step Diet, A Simple Plan for Permanent Weight Loss and Lifelong Vitality. *Prior to founding Just Wellness in 2002, Dr. Ann was a family physician in Charleston for 14 years. For more information, go to: www.dranns10steps.com.*

The Healthy SC Challenge *is an outcome-based, cooperative effort aimed at encouraging individuals, communities and organizations across the state to show shared responsibility in developing innovative ways to improve the health of South Carolina's citizens. For more information about the Healthy SC Challenge, please visit* ***www.healthysc.gov****, or contact Meghan McGuire at 803-737-2325.*