

HOME

Save Time and Money Buying Your Next Refrigerator

NewsUSA

(NU) - Nearly everyone is more cautious with money these days, so major purchases are approached with additional consideration and planning. A new refrigerator, for example, can cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars and may be in your home for 10 or more years. So when it is necessary to replace, budget-focused consumers may first consider the purchase price. However, a refrigerator's reliability, energy efficiency, usable features and ability to store more-affordable bulk foods are also important factors and can offset the initial cost.

Since consumers are in the market for appliances so infrequently, the purchase process can easily become confusing and overwhelming. The tips and guidelines below will help even the most discerning and energy-minded shoppers navigate the showroom floor and identify a reliable refrigerator that will meet their needs.

Compare the capacity and storage. Models with more shelves and bins have a greater surface area, which creates more space for fresh and frozen food deals bought in bulk. Consider a model that will not only fit everything, but will also provide easy access to the most-used items. The Maytag® ICE2O® refrigerator has a bottom mount freezer drawer that features a Smooth-Close™ track system with heavy-duty ball bearing slides that can hold up to 120 pounds of food. The wide drawer can hold deli platters, while durable bins and four Spill-Catcher™ glass shelves help store food in an organized way.

Look for the ENERGY STAR® label. The refrigerator consumes more energy than any other kitchen appliance. According to ENERGY STAR®, replacing a model from the 1980s with an ENERGY STAR-qualified model will offer a savings



Your refrigerator uses more electricity than any other kitchen appliance.

of \$100 per year on utility bills, or \$200 per year if the model is from the 1970s. Features such as a door alarm, power outage indicator, airtight door seals and easy-to-use temperature controls will help maintain a constant temperature and contribute to the efficiency rating.

Consider the usability of the features. Add-on features can save time and money if they eliminate a cost or save a step. A removable ice bucket can be easily brought to the table or cooler. Filtered ice and water dispensers can help save money and the environment by preventing the disposal of plastic water bottles. Some of the newest refrigerators also have ice makers that produce smaller cubes that fit into refillable water bottles.

Examine the hardware. How durable the handles are and how strong the hinges are will directly impact the life of the refrigerator. Open and close the door and drawers to test their strength, and look for heavy-duty stainless steel handles that will remain secure even in the most active households.