



CONTACT:
Justin Hume
Marketing Director
Samsung Electronics SA (Pty.) Ltd.
Tel:+27 11 549 1500
justin.hume@samsung.com

PREPARE TO BE COOL

It's back to school and work, which means packed lunches are back – make the most of your freezer to ensure food isn't wasted and you don't have to spend all your precious time in the kitchen.

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa – 17 January, 2018 – Back to school and work can be an exciting time – new beginnings to go along with all the New Year resolutions made. But with today's frenetic pace, being organised is essential, especially if you want to ensure you and your family eat healthily throughout the day. This is where a freezer comes into its own – use it to store pre-prepared food as well as leftovers and additional ingredients to stave off waste and save time.

Unlike a fridge, the more that's stored in a freezer, the more efficient it is. That's because there's less empty air to chill. If yours isn't full most of the time, save some energy by freezing three-quarter full water bottles to fill in the gaps. Also keep bread fresh by freezing slices, which can be conveniently taken out and toasted from frozen, or will defrost within half an hour for a sandwich making session. Remember that an icy freezer isn't an efficient one, but if you have a frost-free fridge, which is a standard feature with Samsung fridges, then you'll never need to manually defrost your freezer.

Justin Hume, Marketing Director for Samsung Electronics South Africa, says, "The technology behind our fridges and freezers has advanced to such a degree that there's a model to suit any lifestyle. It makes absolute sense to make the utmost use of your fridge and freezer. From freezing pre-made ingredients to making the most of leftovers, the freezer will be one of the most time and energy efficient appliances in your home this year."

Before filling up the freezer with just-cooked food to be stored, ensure its cooled down before its placed inside – hot or warm food can defrost other items next to it and will make the freezer have to work a lot harder to maintain optimal temperature. Remember that no matter how efficient a freezer is, it won't kill off bacteria and once frozen food is thawed, bacteria can multiply quickly. Never re-freeze food unless its going to be cooked in-between. In other words, if there is mince in the freezer, don't re-freeze it once thawed unless its first turned it into bolognaise or some other favourite dish. The cooking process will kill off any bacteria and the cooked meat can be frozen.

Make sure food is wrapped properly. Use freezer bags and try to get as much air out of the bag as possible before placing in the freezer – air around the food, especially if it's moisture-rich, can form ice, which can affect the consistency of the food. Create a labelling system, too – once food is frozen it's not always that easy to identify. Use a blue pen for raw food and a green one for cooked. Make sure frozen food is dated too – although guidelines vary, don't keep much in the freezer for longer than three months.

Not all food takes kindly to being frozen, such as leafy greens or vegetables with a high water content. Muffins are a great item to freeze and for school or work lunches, whether they are sweet or savoury. Simply freeze individually in a freezer bag – you can defrost them overnight in the fridge, or pop one into a lunch box for defrosting during the morning.

You can also make chopped fruit cups that will defrost beautifully in a lunch box. For best results, lay it out on baking paper and freeze for about two hours. Once solid, place them in a single layer inside a freezer bag or box so you can easily mix and match the fruit pieces for a lunch-time energy boost.

Whatever your fridge and freezer needs are this year, be sure to investigate how you can optimise on your appliance's functionality to make your life a little bit easier and more efficient.

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For further information, please contact:

Anneke du Toit
PR Worx
011 896 1818
082 791 2202
anneke@prworx.co.za

Jake Griffioen
Samsung Electronics South Africa
011 549 1646
071 671 2052
Jakes.g@samsung.com