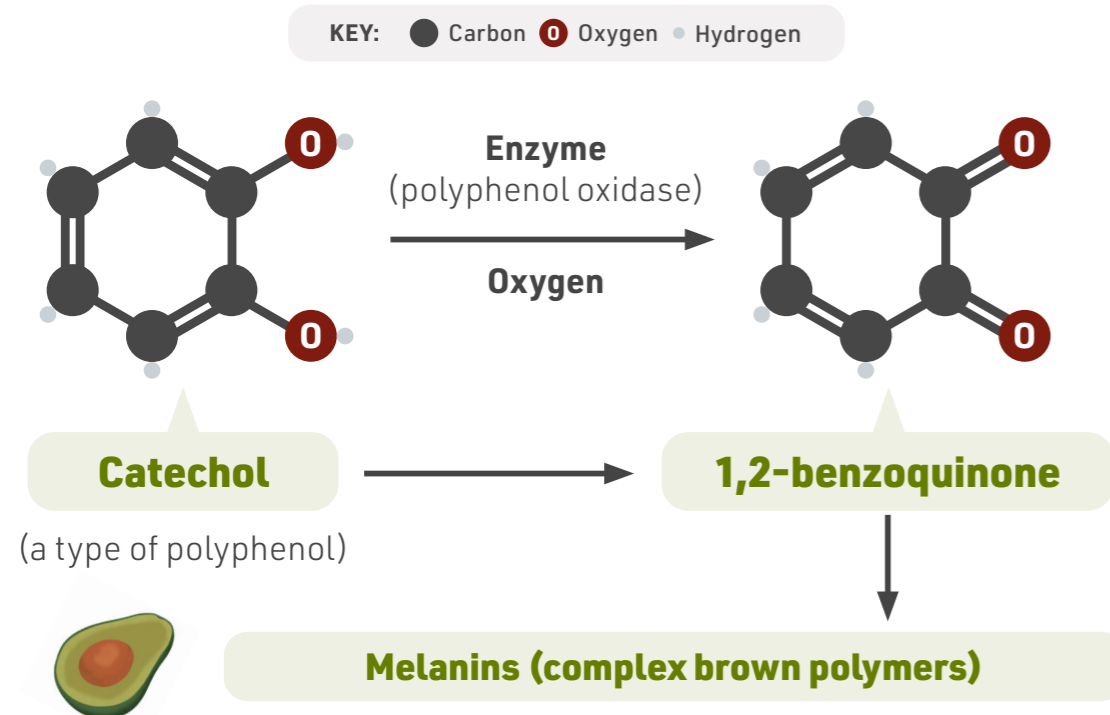


How can you stop avocados from browning?

What makes avocados go brown?

Avocados contain compounds called phenols. Exposure to oxygen converts phenols to compounds called quinones. The enzyme polyphenol oxidase speeds up this process.



Some quinone compounds are toxic to bacteria, and so the process is beneficial for the fruit. However, quinones can also react with themselves to form long polymer chains, causing the brown colouration. This also happens in many other fruits. Avocados brown quickly as they have a large amount of polyphenol oxidase.

The polymeric compounds causing the brown colouration are melanin pigments. Melanin is also the primary pigment determining skin colour in humans.



Preventing the browning of avocados



0 hours



3 hours



6 hours



9 hours



12 hours

Contrary to popular belief, leaving the stone in the avocado or in guacamole doesn't slow browning as it doesn't block oxygen. Covering with clingfilm can block oxygen and delay browning. Adding lemon or lime juice, or chilling the avocado, can also delay browning, as it inhibits the activity of the polyphenol oxidase enzyme.