January 9, 2020
The WHO indicates that the infection is caused by a new type of coronavirus

January 13
First reported spread of new coronavirus outside of China with a case in Thailand

January 27
Merck Research Labs convenes a research team to gather current understanding of virus and identify possible approaches for vaccines and therapeutics, and initiates efforts to identify compounds with potential activity against SARS-CoV-2. Over the next several weeks, nearly 1,000 compounds from Merck’s vast libraries are evaluated for activity against SARS-CoV-2.

January 10
China shares the genetic code of the new virus

January 21
US CDC confirms first case of coronavirus in the US

January 30
WHO declares the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern

February
Merck announces completion of acquisition of Oncoimmune to accelerate development of CD24Fc, a candidate for the treatment of patients with severe and critical COVID-19

March 11
WHO declares COVID-19 a Pandemic

March 25
Merck joins Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation COVID-19 consortium

April 7
Merck joins ACTIV, NIH-led initiative to help speed development of investigational COVID-19 vaccine and treatment options

April 17
Merck and Institute for Systems Biology announce a new research collaboration to define molecular mechanisms of SARS-CoV-2 infection and identify potential prognostic biomarkers

May 26
Merck announces multiple scientific efforts to combat COVID-19: with Ridgeback Bio, to develop a novel, oral antiviral candidate (MK-4482); with IAVI, to develop an rVSV-vector based vaccine (V590); and to acquire Themis, to develop a measles-vector based vaccine (V591)

June 12
Merck and Peptidream announce collaboration to discover and develop peptide therapeutics for the treatment of COVID-19

June 19
Ridgeback Bio announces start of Phase 1 trials of MK-4482

July 14
Merck and N.J.-based hospital system Hackensack Meridian announce collaboration to investigate drugs for treating COVID-19

August 24
First patient dosed in Phase 1 study of V591

November 2
First patient dosed in Phase 1 study of V590

November 23
Merck announces the planned acquisition of Oncoimmune to accelerate development of CD24Fc, a candidate for the treatment of patients with severe and critical COVID-19

January 25, 2021
Merck announces discontinuation of V590 and V591 vaccine programs and continued focus on development of two investigational therapeutic candidates

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