March 2
MSD announces agreement with BARDA to make some of the company’s manufacturing facilities available for production of COVID-19 vaccines and medicines, and announces agreements with Johnson & Johnson to support manufacturing and supply of Johnson & Johnson’s SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 vaccine

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

January 27
MSD 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 MSD’s vast libraries are evaluated for activity against SARS-CoV-2.

March 11
WHO declares COVID-19 a Pandemic

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

April 27
MSD and Institute for Systems Biology announce a new research collaboration to define molecular mechanisms of SARS-CoV-2 infection and identify potential prognostic biomarkers

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

July 14
MSD 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

December 23
MSD announces completion of Oncoimmune acquisition

March 2
MSD announces agreement with BARDA to make some of the company’s manufacturing facilities available for production of COVID-19 vaccines and medicines, and announces agreements with Johnson & Johnson to support manufacturing and supply of Johnson & Johnson’s SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 vaccine

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

Early March
Starting in March, MSD engaged in discussions with a broad range of external organizations to find opportunities to lend our expertise and capabilities to others’ scientific efforts, and to identify promising scientific platforms for anti-virals and vaccines that MSD could help to develop and manufacture on a global scale. These discussions resulted in several collaborations over the next few months.

April 17
MSD joins ACTIV, NIH-led initiative to help speed development of investigational COVID-19 vaccine and treatment options

May 26
MSD 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 19
Ridgeback Bio announces start of Phase 2 trials of MK-4482

June 20
MSD announces completion of acquisition of Themis

July 21
MSD and IRBM announce collaboration to develop investigational peptides against COVID-19

October 19
First patient dosed in Phase 2/3 study of MK-4482

November 23
MSD announces the planned acquisition of Oncolimmune to accelerate development of CD24Fc, a candidate for the treatment of patients hospitalized with COVID-19

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