One puzzling aspect of the quantifier every is that it can appear with a plural noun only when a cardinal or few is present.

(1) Every {day / *days}

(2) Every {two / three / few} days

Moreover, every two N contrasts with any/no two N in that N must be an object which can find a place along a spatial or temporal sequence. Thus (3) is good, but (4) and (5) -- where the desired meaning should be “every (possible) pair of days/houses/numbers” -- is very marginal. The problem is that days/houses/numbers are not linearly ordered.

(3) Every three {days / hours / miles / margheritas}, John drinks a bloody Mary.

(4) a. I could mark {?? every / any} two days in the calendar.
   b. {??Every / Any / No} two houses are identical.

(5) {*Every / Any / No} two winning numbers would give you a lot of money
(cannot mean “every combination of two winning numbers...”)

A largely overlapping restriction is that, even with nouns like days, the every+Card+N construction is marginal as an argument (even with measure verbs: ?? He counted/measured every two days ). All well-formed occurrences are frequency adjuncts.

Kayne (2002) accounts for the contrast (1)/(2) by proposing that cardinals/few may be followed by the abstract word NUMBER, which is (optionally) singular. Every would agree with NUMBER and not with the plural days. This idea however doesn’t explain the meaning restrictions noted in (4/5). An alternative in the same spirit is that 2 days in every 2 days is a measure phrase (MP) measuring an abstract singular noun like TIME or LENGTH; it is this noun which agrees with every.

(6) a. Every [MP 2 days] TIME
   b. Every [MP three miles] LENGTH

The apparent head of the construction only provides a unit of measure for a (context-
tually defined) linear sequence. A formal semantic representation should aim to capture a meaning along these lines:

(7) Every [two miles] LENGTH = λE [For all P such that P is the endpoint of a two-mile segment along a certain path, E is an event and E happens at P]

This approach immediately derives *Every days (MPs need numerals), (5) (winning numbers cannot measure anything), and (8) (units of measure must be identical).

(8) *Every two different days

References