

Operation on Figure Skater Plushenko a Success

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev standing with Evgeni Plushenko at a ceremony for Russia's Olympic medallists.

Russian figure skater Evgeni Plushenko has undergone successful surgery on a back injury that forced him to withdraw from the individual event at the Sochi Winter Olympics, doctors in Israel said.

"The operation that lasted three and a half hours has finished, everything is great," said Igor Pyatigorsky, head of the clinic in Tel Aviv.

"He feels great. I think tomorrow he'll stand up and walk, as is the case usually. I've already talked to him," Pyatigorsky said Monday.

Plushenko won his second career Olympic gold medal with Russia in the inaugural team event at last month's Olympics, but dramatically pulled out of the individual competition after

aggravating an old problem minutes before he was due to skate.

A screw that supported an artificial intervertebral disc in Plushenko's back broke after he attempted a triple axel jump in the warm-up. Recovery from the operation is expected to take at least six months.

Plushenko's last-minute withdrawal caused a storm of controversy in Russia. Debate had raged before the Games over whether he would be fit enough to skate four programs in eight days, having endured 12 operations in the last few years.

Many were lobbying for 18-year-old Maxim Kovtun to take up the sole Russian place in the singles contest after he beat Plushenko in the Russian national championships.

Last month, Plushenko backtracked on an earlier statement that he would retire, saying that he could try to qualify for the next Winter Games in Pyeongchang in 2018, when he will be 35 and far older than any current elite-level skater.

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