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## Youkilis undergoes successful surgery on Thursday

Lou DiPietro

Kevin Youkilis underwent successful surgery to repair a herniated disc in his back on Thursday.

The Yankees and the office of spine specialist Dr. Robert Watkins, who performed the surgery, released the following statement Thursday evening:

*"New York Yankees' third baseman Kevin Youkilis underwent a microscopic lumbar discectomy surgery performed by Dr. Robert Watkins at the Marina Del Rey Hospital in Los Angeles. The surgery went well. The timing of his return to baseball will depend on his progression through the rehabilitation program."*

Youkilis was placed on the disabled list on June 14, one day after he played all 18 innings of the Yankees' loss in Oakland. Following that game, Youkilis woke up with numbness in his foot that wouldn't go away. An MRI performed by Dr. Watkins revealed the herniated disc.

On Tuesday, Yankees general manager Brian Cashman announced the diagnosis and surgery, saying Youkilis would miss a minimum of 10 to 12 weeks.

"This is not how you draw it up, no doubt about it, but he's gotta get it fixed and there's nothing we can do about it," Cashman said Tuesday. "I'd rather not know he's out, but it is what it is. Kevin is in the best medical care with Dr. Watkins and his associates, and he's no longer an option for us for the next two months or so."

Youkilis, who has a history of back issues, was initially removed from a game in Toronto on April 20 with stiffness in his back, and he sat out a week before returning on April 27. But he played just that one game, also against the Jays, before being placed on the disabled list again with a lumbar strain.

Youkilis returned alongside Mark Teixeira on May 31 and went 6-for-41 (.146) with 11 strikeouts in 11 games before returning to the DL.

Overall, the 34-year-old Youkilis is hitting .219 with two home runs and eight RBIs in 28 games this season.

"He looked great in the spring and we had high hopes," Cashman said of Youkilis. "He did so much for Boston over the years, and he's the type of player you want -- a gamer with power and plate discipline. He's not the player he used to be, but he demolishes left-handed pitching, and with [Alex Rodriguez's] injury, he was best option if he was healthy."

While the statement indicated that Youkilis' return depends on his rehab, Cashman's initial 10-to-12 week timeframe puts the earliest date of Youk's return anywhere between Aug. 29 and Sept. 12 -- meaning that he likely will not return until rosters expand on Sept. 1, if at all, this season.

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